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A GS-6 secretary earning \$26,000 per year as a single parent of a 1-year-old child would have to pay \$11,440, more than half of her after-tax salary, on child care alone. This is a personal example. Put simply, without help from her employer, she would not be able to afford to work and raise her child.

This legislation gives federal agencies the flexibility similar to that enjoyed by the Department of Defense to tailor their child care programs to meet the particular needs of their employees. The Department of Defense, writing in support of my legislation, stated that these provisions will help remedy the current situation creating "the 'have's and the have not's' between the Department of Defense and other federal agencies because other agencies lack the authority to subsidize personnel costs." That is a quote.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that these child care provisions do not grant regulatory authority to the Office of Personnel Management that could lead the way to federalized child care. Mr. Speaker, I am dismayed at the level of misinformation that is being spread against these common sense provisions. The conferees explicitly stated that any regulations promulgated by OPM pursuant to this authority "shall only address the use of appropriated funds to provide child care services and improve the affordability of child care for lower income employees."

Mr. Speaker, by empowering agencies to work as partners with employees to meet their child care needs, Congress truly will be encouraging family-friendly federal workplaces in higher productivity. Retaining our good civil servants is essential to the well-being of our democracy.

In addition to empowering our agencies to create family-friendly workplaces, I am pleased that the conference report provides a 4.8 percent pay increase for our federal civilian employees, equaling the pay increase provided for uniformed military personnel and other legislation.

I am encouraged that this legislation includes the victory that we won during the debate on the fiscal year 1999 Treasury, Postal bill providing for contraceptive coverage in the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program. Contraceptives help couples plan wanted pregnancies and reduce the need for abortions. This conference report ensures that we will continue treating prescription contraceptives the same as all other covered drugs in order to achieve parity between the benefits offered to male participants in FEHB plans and those offered to female ones.

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased about the inclusion of language that would require federal agencies to have a policy in place to address sex discrimination and harassment. It is a provision that steps in the right direction to counter the roadblocks for women in federal employment and can only bring

us closer to creating a highly effective work force as we face the challenges of the new millennium.

I think this conference report is important. I think it reflects a sensible compromise between multiple interests.

Again, I want to thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE), and thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the ranking member, for the very good work. I encourage all of my colleagues to support these important provisions to help federal employees and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the following letter from the General Counsel of the Department of Defense:

GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE,
Washington, DC, May 18, 1999.

Hon. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA,
House of Representatives, Rayburn House Office
Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN MORELLA: This is in response to your request for the views of the Department of Defense on H.R. 206, the Federal Employee Child Care Affordability Act, and how it would benefit the Department of Defense.

The Department of Defense has no objections to the proposed legislation and in fact will benefit from H.R. 206.

The Department of Defense is committed to providing quality affordable child care for both military and civilian employees of the Department. We also are active partners with both the Office of Personnel Management and the General Services Administration in trying to share "lessons learned" from the military child care experiences with the rest of the Federal government. One of the lessons we have learned is that quality child care costs more than most lower income and lower ranking members of our community, both military and civilian, can afford. Because of this, we established a policy where families pay child care fees based on their total family income. We pay the balance from funds appropriated to the Department of Defense for its operations and maintenance.

H.R. 206 would provide other Federal agencies the authority to lower the cost of child care for lower income families in a similar manner to how the Department of Defense has done this. The bill, if enacted, would make it easier for us to become partners with other Federal agencies when we are co-located in Federal buildings or leased facilities. For example, many of our military recruiting offices are located with other Federal agencies in buildings conveniently located for the communities they serve. Your legislation, if enacted, would permit us to offer more affordable care to these very critical personnel.

The current Federal child care policies create the "have's and the have not's" between the Department of Defense and all other Federal agencies because other agencies lack the authority to subsidize personnel costs. H.R. 206 would assist other Federal agencies in moving closer to the military in quality, cost and availability of child care by decreasing the gap in funding. Requiring any appropriated funds to be used to improve the affordability of child care for lower income employees would move other Federal child care programs closer to the military model which subsidizes child care for lower income employees. This sets the stage to make the entire Federal Government a model for the country in the provision of affordable child care.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that, from the standpoint of the Administration's program, there is no objection to the presentation of this report for the consideration of the Committee.

Sincerely,

JUDITH A. MILLER.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk for a moment on language that is in the statement of managers for the conference report on the Treasury and General Government's appropriations bills. This deals with the issue of a report that is to be submitted to Congress on personal search inspections policies and practices of the U.S. Customs Service.

Because of the implications the personal search policy has for individual rights, Congress clearly needs to monitor proposed policies and their implementation. We have anticipated and we expect that Customs Service will prepare this report, a report that will cover changes being implemented, together with an action plan for further improvement in its personal search policies, and that they would submit this to the Secretary of the Treasury for approval and transmittal to the Committee on Appropriations.

Let me make note of the fact that Commissioner Kelly has taken steps that demonstrate his commitment to improving Customs' policy on personal search of international passengers at our airports. The search process has been made less invasive. Supervisors are being made more accountable by being more closely involved in decisions to conduct a personal search.

I think it is clear that the commissioner is committed to fairness in the processing of international passengers and making sure that there is no racial bias in selecting who is searched. But this does not diminish our responsibility as a Congress to oversee this issue and to make sure that individual rights are being protected.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) if he would like to add any comments to this.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE), and I agree with him. Allegations of unfair treatment by Customs personnel toward minorities at international airports is certainly taken seriously by this committee. This is an area where we need to exercise our oversight responsibilities.

The United States Customs Service has taken these allegations seriously as well and has undertaken a thorough review of its policies. More importantly, an independent panel has been appointed to review the practices of personal searches at the Customs Service and by the Customs Service.

The Personal Search Review Commission is chaired by a widely respected individual, Ms. Constance Newman, and includes three esteemed officials from other agencies. As someone